

THE “EYE”

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

JULY-AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2004



Summer Vacation

Well the time has finally come to use your accumulated vacation hours and take a nice, relaxing, scenic trip. You don't want to be worrying about the security of your home and belongings when you should be enjoying a fun-filled vacation. Hopefully, some of the following suggestions will keep your home safe while you are gone.

The first rule of vacation security is to keep a “business as usual” look about your property. One easy way to do this would be to have someone you trust house-sit while you are gone. This person can take care of your mail and newspapers, as well as keep the lawn trimmed. An appearance of a normal routine by the house-sitter will tell the opportunistic burglar that your home is occupied. The average burglar prefers to do his work when no one is home.

If you choose not to go with a house-sitter you still need to have the appearance that there is someone home. This means that the newspaper should be stopped and your mail held at the post office while you are away. Some arrangements should be made to have the lawn mowed during a summer vacation and the sidewalks cleaned during a winter vacation. You might consider having a neighbor park one of their cars in your drive to aid in the illusion that someone is staying in your home.

Lighting is always important in a home security plan and one of the best ways to create a perception of risk on the part of the criminal. Have at least one or two interior lights on timers, set for different time periods, and one interior which is left on all the time. These lights do not need to be high wattage bulbs. You could also put an AM or FM radio on a timer which would give the impression that you were home. You should have lighting near all your exterior doors, including the overhead garage door. Ideally these lights should be set up with a photo-cell switch, which turns them on at sunset and off at sunrise. Exterior lights with motion sensors also work well, in that they will alert your neighbors that someone is getting close to your home.

A good neighbor can be the most valuable asset in your home security plan; someone to keep an eye on your home and call the police if there is anything suspicious happening. If you would like a police officer to check your home while you are gone you may call 441-7204 at least seven days prior to leaving, and request a “vacation check.” It is a good idea to leave a key to your house with a trusted neighbor, in case there is a need for the police officers to check the inside of the house or to secure it. Now go and enjoy your trip.

HOME SECURITY - GARAGE DOORS

During 2003 there were 1,286 residential burglaries. Up to May 31st, 2004 there have been 435. The largest percentage of these burglaries continue to be at homes with unsecured or open garage doors. To prevent being victimized by a burglar you need to think about your garage area along with the rest of your home.

Failure to close or lock garage doors is the most prevalent security problem. Make sure to pull the overhead door closed and latch it. A padlock attached to the door track, or a hasp, can provide additional security. Check how your door fits into its track. If the door is too loose it is possible to push on it and make it come out of the track. If you have an electric door opener check the tension to make sure the door is secure when down and cannot be pushed up. When you plan to be gone for any extended period you can unplug the opener to assure that the door will not be opened from outside. The remote for your electric opener should be kept in your car where it cannot be readily seen or found. If your car was broken into while it was away from home the thief could steal the remote. While they were inside your car they could have access to the vehicle registration which has your address and they could then have easy access to your home. Finally, any entry door from the garage that goes into the residence should be kept locked.

Consider leaving some outside lights on overnight. If you can keep your garage area illuminated you will discourage potential burglars who do not want to be seen. Motion activated lights are very effective and may be more efficient than leaving lights on all night.

By exercising some simple home security we could all have an impact on our own safety and reduce the number of these crimes that are occurring in our neighborhoods.

Summary Overview

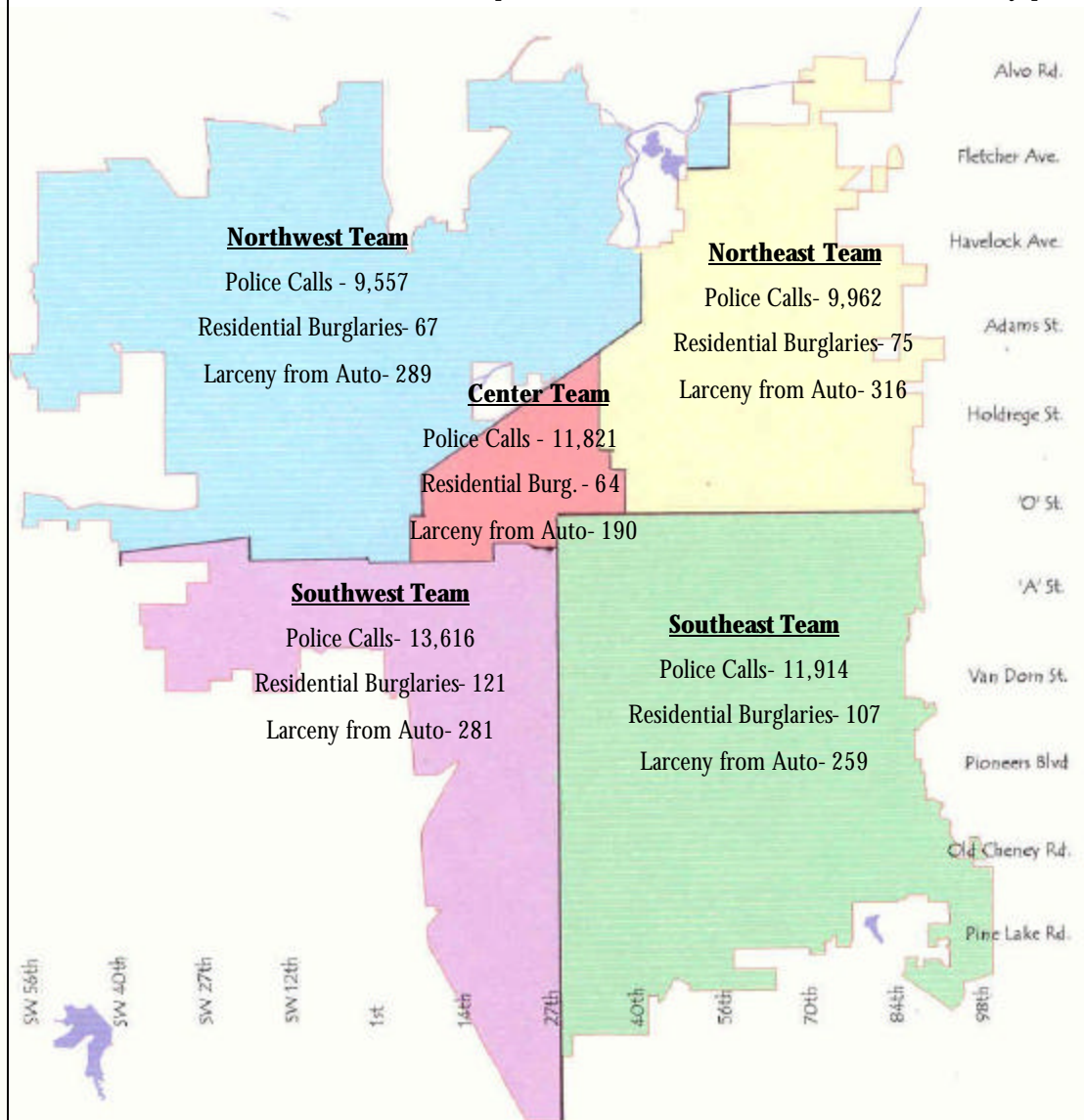
Residential burglaries are down 2% compared to this time last year. However, numerous burglaries continue to occur at residences and at neighboring businesses. The number one target for the burglar is still the home that has an open or unsecured garage door. The emphasis on simple home security cannot be stressed enough.

The other factor that needs to be emphasized is the ability to recognize suspicious behavior when it occurs in your neighborhood. Businesses, schools, and churches (all integral parts of your neighborhoods) are being burglarized too often. During the months that schools are out of session remember to pay attention to school areas and any activity that may be occurring there. If something seems wrong, or suspicious, call the police department at 441-6000 so a patrol officer could be dispatched to investigate.

Larcenies from vehicles are **down 24%** compared to this time last year. Keep exercising good security with your vehicle!

SUMMARY OF REPORTED CRIMES between 1-1-2004 and 5-31-2004

For additional information, statistics, or crime maps refer to the LPD web-site at: www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/police

**21st ANNUAL NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**

Tuesday, August 3rd, will be the 21st annual "National Night Out." From 7 to 10, residents in neighborhoods throughout Lincoln are asked to lock their doors, turn on outside lights and spend the evening outside with their neighbors. Many neighborhoods host a variety of special events such as block parties, cookouts, and visits with police.

"National Night Out" is a program designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness; generate support for, and participation in, local anti-crime efforts; strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships; and, send a message to criminals letting them know neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

We would like to encourage every Neighborhood Watch Group to participate. Get your neighbors together and get reacquainted. If you have a Lincoln Fire & Rescue house in your neighborhood invite the firefighters and paramedics to join you. If you would like to have a police officer stop by your event please call the Crime Prevention Group at 441-7261. We will organize a list of requests so that officers can stop by as many events as possible. Please remember that an officer's time may be restricted by the number of requests and by the need to respond to calls for service. Call our office no later than Tuesday, July 27th with your requests (you can leave your name, address, & time frame of your function on our voice mail). You can get other information regarding "National Night Out" at: www.nationalnightout.org



The number of door-to-door salesmen tend to increase during the summer months in Lincoln with merchandise usually being cleaning products, magazine sales, or books. While many people have purchased these items without any problems, there are some considerations each consumer should be aware of.

The companies represented are typically located out of state with limited means of contacting them if a problem arises. They hire young people from various cities on a short-term basis. These people have no ties to our community. These young people are also unaware of Lincoln's city ordinance which requires a peddlers permit for these types of sales.

A company "supervisor" will drop these young people off in neighborhoods with high expectations of sales. The demands placed on these people result in high pressure sales tactics, failure to secure or produce a permit, and wanting full payment in advance. City ordinance restricts sales between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on any day of the week and requires each person to have a permit.

Should you feel uncomfortable buying products from these vendors, do not hesitate to say no! These services and products are ordinary items that can be found at local stores.

If you are suspicious about the validity of a permit a vendor may show you, call the non-emergency number of 441-6000 as soon as the person leaves your door. Please provide as much information as possible about the salesperson to the call taker. This will assist the police officer in their locating and contacting the vendor. A valid permit will include the name of the licensee, the business they represent, a description of their product and the hours of sale. The 8"x3" form includes the city seal and clerk's signature.

AWARENESS & COMMUNITY SAFETY

In the past few years there has been legislation created to promote safety for citizens. The "Sex Offender Registry" is a part of that legislation making information available to you to increase awareness. In Nebraska, the Sex Offender Registry is maintained by the Nebraska State Patrol. Persons who have been convicted of such crimes as non-parental kidnapping of a minor, false imprisonment of a minor, sexual assault, pandering, and others, are required to register with the State Patrol. The registrants are divided into three categories based on their risk to re-offend:

- Level One (low risk): Law enforcement agencies are notified.
 - Level Two (moderate risk): Law enforcement, schools, daycare centers, religious & youth organizations are notified.
 - Level Three (high risk): All of the above plus the public will be notified.
- Public notification of Level Three offenders includes the release of their name, address, photograph, physical description and the offense which required the person to register.

When we talk about crime prevention we always talk about the importance of "being aware." The purpose, and benefit, of this registry is exactly that – to keep citizens aware of what is happening in their neighborhoods. Of course part of this legislation includes the words, "Sex offender registry information shall not be used to retaliate against the registrant... threats of harm are illegal and will result in arrest and prosecution." Sex offenders have always been in our communities. The notification process removes their ability to act in secret.

You can access registry information at : www.nsp.state.ne.us or through a link on our web-site.

**** NOTICE TO GROUP COORDINATORS ****

Due to postage changes we will begin, with this issue of "THE EYE", packaging the newsletter in bundles no greater than eight. If you have a large number of members in your group you may watch for an extra packet. Previously they were packaged at a maximum of ten copies.

CRIME-FREE DOLLARS

The most frequent property crime in Lincoln continues to be larcenies from autos. In an effort to raise awareness and reduce the numbers of this crime the Lincoln Police Crime Prevention Group once again teamed up with AAA Insurance. Teens, in high school or college, are one of the most victimized groups. To impact that group, officers contacted students at all six of the Lincoln Public High Schools. They were asked to make sure all valuables were either removed or placed out of sight and that the vehicle was locked. During subsequent days the parking areas around these schools were surveyed. The license plate numbers of cars that met the safety criteria were written down. On May 17th a random drawing was held and one license number from each school was pulled out of the hat. The six students associated with the drawn numbers each won \$50 cash- provided by AAA Insurance. The winners are:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| • Richy L Massa | Lincoln High |
| • Whitney Thiel | Southeast High |
| • Benjamin Richter | Northeast High |
| • Anna Hill | Southwest High |
| • Mica Dearing | East High |
| • Tommy N. Vu | Northstar High |



Marilyn Muir, of AAA Insurance, draws the winning numbers with Sergeant Mike Siefkes.

The "EYE"
Neighborhood Watch

LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT
CRIME PREVENTION GROUP
575 SOUTH 10TH ST.
LINCOLN NE, 68508

Return Service Requested



Blast from the past...



July 4th traffic on "O" Street around 1900. The combination of horses, bicycles, and automobiles were an image of changing times. (LPD)

As we search this summer for the lowest gas prices, there was a time when gasoline was scarce simply because it was a novelty.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Lincoln streets were an odd mixture of horse drawn carriages, electric trolley cars, bicycles, and gasoline powered automobiles.

A 1905 state law required a \$1 horseless carriage fee to be assessed by all counties. Lincoln officials also saw the need for ordinances that would govern the operation on city streets. The center of the street was designated as the parking spot for these new means of transportation.

Speeding and raising dust, however, were other issues to deal with. Since the Lincoln Police didn't have any vehicles to catch violators, a stop watch was used by foot patrolmen standing on the curb to clock speeders. The ticket was then hand delivered to the address of the vehicle's owner.

The first motorized vehicles purchased by the department were three Harley Davidson motorcycles in 1920. They were very effective in catching speed violators in our changing city.